

Beachstarting skills

Beachstarting, if taught correctly, will give your students a great 'feel good' factor, in a short period of time. With patience from their instructor and the use of relevant exercises, students can learn improved rig and board control and progress more easily towards the waterstart.

Encouraging better board and rig control

Your students need to learn to move the board in shallow water with ease. For this they must practice varying the power element of the Fwd formula, encouraging them to move the board towards and away from the wind. They do this by increasing the power and using a **pulling and pushing motion through their front hand on the mast and their back hand on the boom**. Ensure they walk with the board, keeping themselves close to and around the back quarter of the board.

Towards the wind

Pulling up with the front hand, (placed on the mast, just above the boom) and pushing down on the boom with the back hand helps the nose of the board turn towards the wind.



Away from the wind

Pushing through the front hand on the mast, towards the mastfoot, whilst pulling up lightly with the back hand on the boom, directs the nose of the board away from the wind.



Once your students have got the feeling and movement in the rig, encourage them to:

- draw figure of eights in the water with the nose of their board
- turn the nose of the board through 180° to face a new direction, and then perhaps a full 360°, both clockwise and anti-clockwise.

During these exercises, the rig will need to be flipped as the students reach the downwind position. Ensure they maintain control by keeping hold of the rig, taking it past this point and onto a broad reach heading on the new side before letting go with the boom hand first, letting the rig flip and switching the hands.

These exercises will help increase awareness of how the board and rig work together in relation to the wind direction.

- Don't let the students manhandle the rig. Get them to use the wind to their advantage, using only light pressure through their hands
- Always place the front hand on the mast, above the boom
- If you see them exerting lots of effort, they're doing it wrong!

A step-by-step guide

For those who want to refresh their knowledge or teach beachstarting for the first time, below is a step-by-step guide to the beachstart.

1. Stand at the windward back quarter of the board, towards the back foot straps. Position the board across the wind and the rig above your head with the mast across the wind



2. Place the back foot just in front of the back straps with your heel angled in towards you (foot 45° over the centre line of the board). This will help trim the board correctly as you place more weight on the board.



3. Using a rig twisting action (see the intermediate coaching notes), initiate the rig elevation and create lift. At the same time roll your head towards the mastfoot in a 'nose-to-toes' action and flex your back leg, enabling you to come up onto the



board. (see picture below for an exercise to reinforce this action) *This is key; Superman/climbing up stairs are all good ways to explain and encourage our students to push the rig away with the front hand and not pull down. First attempts tend to lead students to rely on the rig to pull them up onto the board.*

4. You should now be on the board in a low Super 7 stance. To encourage the board to get going, drop your body down and push through the toes of your front foot.



A great land based exercise for developing the 'nose over toes' action



5. When moving, adopt a stance appropriate to the conditions and re-establish all elements of the Fwd formula – vision, trim, balance, power and stance.



Exercises to promote progression onto waterstarting

Leg drags

Get your students to drag their front leg in the water past their knee, if possible, while sailing the board in a straight line. This will require and develop good rig control through the use of power and balance.

Deeper beachstarts

The deeper you encourage your students to practice their beachstarts, the more like waterstarts they become! Deeper beachstarts will develop the progression onto waterstarts especially by improving rig twisting and becoming really dynamic with the nose-over-toes action.

Varying wind conditions and beachstarting in both directions

As instructors, you are no doubt aware of how important this is in helping your students develop their skills in *all* wind strengths and directions. You would be amazed how many people have only ever beachstarted in one direction!

Further information can be found in the Intermediate Coaching Notes available as a download from the RYA website – go to the Instructor Resources section of www.rya.org.uk/WorkingWithUs